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R. CLAY, SONS, AND TAYLOR, PRINTERS,
BREAD STREET HILL.

By Thomas E Brown

BETSY LEE.

A FO'C'S'LE YARN.

I SAID I would ? Well, I hardly know,
But a yarn's a yarn ; so here we go.
It's along of me and a Lawyer's Clerk,
You've seen mayhap that sort of spark !
As neat and as pert, and as sharp as a pin,
With a mossel of hair on the tip of his chin ;
With his face so fine, and his tongue so glib,
And a saucy cock in the set of his jib ;

With his rings and his studs and all the rest,
And half a chain cable paid out on his breast.
Now there's different divils ashore and at sea,
And a divil's a divil wherever he be ;
But if you want the rael ould mark,
The divil of divils is the Lawyér's Clerk.
Well—out it must come, though it be with a wrench,
And I must tell you about a wench
That I was a courtin of, yes me !
Aye, and her name it was Betsy Lee.
Betsy Lee—*you thought there was love*
In the case—did you, Bob? So help me I'll shove
This boot down your throat, if you don't stop
 laughin ;
It's a regular stopper that snigglin and chaffin.
When a man has a yarn to spin, d'ye see,
He must spin it away, and spin it free,

Or else—well perhaps—*there isn no call—*

But just don't do it again, that's all !

Now most of you lads has had a spell
Of courtin and that, and it's hard to tell
How ever a youngster comes to fancy
That of all the gels it's Jinny or Nancy,
Or Mary or Betsy that must be hisn.
I don't know how it is or it isn,
But some time or other it comes to us all,
Just like a clap of shoot or a squall,
Or a snake or a viper, or some such dirt,
Creep—creep—creepin under your shirt,
And slidin and slippin right into your breast,
And makin you as you can't get rest :
And it works and it works till you feel your heart
 risin—

God knows what it is if it isn't pisin.
You've bathed in a dub that had seaweed in it,
And just dropt your legs to rest for a minute,
And let them go lazily dingle—dangle,
And felt them caught by the twistin' tangle—
That's somethin' like the kind of job ;
But ah, I loved Betsy, I did—now, Bob !

You see—we're a roughish set of chaps,
That's brought up rough on our mummies' laps ;
And we grow and we run about shoutin' and foolin'
Till we gets to be lumps, and fit for the schoolin'.
Then we gets to know the marks and the signs,
And we leaves the school, and we sticks to the
lines,
Baitin' and settin' and haulin' and that,
Till we know every fish from a whale to a sprat ;

And we gets big and strong, for it do make you
stronger

To row a big boat, and to pull at a conger.

Then what with a cobblin up of the yawl,

And a patchin and mendin the nets for the trawl,

And a risin early and a goin to bed late,

And a dramin of scollops as big as a plate,

And the hooks and the creels and the oars and the
gut,

You'd say there's no room for a little slut.

But howsomdever it's not the case,

And a pretty face is a pretty face ;

And through the whole coil, as bright as a star,

A gel slips in, and there you are !

Well, that was just the way with me

And the gel I'm speakin of—Betsy Lee.

Ah, mates ! it's wonderful too—the years

You may live dead-on-end with your eyes and your
ears

Right alongside of the lass that's goin

To be your sweetheart, and you never knowin !

Her father and mine used to hob-and-nob,

Being next-door neighbours—avast that Bob !

You didn't laugh ?—you lubberly skunk !

It's div'lish nice for a fool in his bunk

To be lyin and laughin, and me goin on

And a tellin such things—now isn it, John ?

Eh, Bill ? He says he—*meant nothin by it ?*—

Well, I only want the chap to be quiet.

For there's wounds, my mates, that won't take healins,

And if a man's a man, he's got his feelins.

All right ! I thank you, William my lad,

I *will* just taste it—it's not so bad.

Well—as I was a sayin, her father and mine
Was neighbours, and both in the fisherman line ;
And their cottages stood on the open beach,
With a nice bit of garden aback of them each.
You know the way them houses is fixed,
With the pigs and the hens and the childher mixed ;
And the mothers go round when the nights begin,
And whips up their own, and takes them in.
Her father was terrible fond of flowers,
And his garden was twice as handsome as ours—
A mortal keen eye he had for the varmin,
And his talk was always of plantin and farmin.
He had roses hangin above his door,
Uncommon fine roses they was to be sure,
And the joy of my heart was to pull them there,
And break them in pieces on Betsy's hair.
Not that Betsy was much of a size

At the time I mean, but she had big eyes,
So big and so blue, and so far asunder,
And she looked so sollum I used to wonder.
That was all—just baby play,
Knockin about the boats all day,
And sometimes a lot of us takin hands
And racin like mad things over the sands.
Ah! it wouldn be bad for some of us
If we'd never gone funder, and never fared wuss ;
If we'd never grown up, and never got big,
If we'd never took the brandy swig,
If we were skippin and scamp'rin and cap'rin still
On the sand that lies below the hill,
Crunchin its grey ribs with the beat
Of our little patterin naked feet ;
If we'd just keep childher upon the shore
For ever and ever and ever more.

There's Bob again, and also Dick !
Now the question is, which am I goin to lick,
Though it's an ugly sort of a thing to lather
A lad, when you was shipmates with his father.
You—*ast my pardon ?*—well, there let it end,
For a son is a son, and a friend is a friend.

Now the beauty of the thing when childher plays is
The terrible wonderful length the days is.
Up you jumps, and out in the sun,
And you fancy the day will never be done :
And you're chasin the bumbees hummin so cross
In the hot sweet air among the goss,
Or gath'rin blue-bells, or lookin for eggs,
Or peltin the ducks with their yalla legs,
Or a climbin, and nearly breakin your skulls,
Or a shoutin for divilment after the gulls,

Or a thinkin of nothin, but down at the tide,

Singin out for the happy you feel inside.

That's the way with the kids, you know,

And the years do come and the years do go,

And when you look back it's all like a puff,

Happy and over and short enough.

Now, Bob ! are you at it again ? all right !

Just somebody give the fellow a light !

Well, I never took notions on Betsy Lee,

Nor no more did she, I suppose, on me,

Till one day diggin upon the sand—

Gibbins, of course you'll understand,

A lad as was always a cheeky young sprout,

Began a pullin of Betsy about ;

And he worried the wench till her shoulders were
bare

And he slipped the knot of her beautiful hair,
And down it come, as you may say,
Just like a shower of golden spray,
Blown this way and that by a gamesome breeze,
And a rip-rip-rippin down to her knees.
I looked at Betsy—my gough ! how she stood !
A quiv'rin all over, and her face like blood !
And her eyes, all wet with tears, like fire,
And her breast a swellin higher and higher ;
And she gripped her sickle with a twitchy feel,
And her thumb started out like a coil of steel,
And a cloud seemed to pass from my eyes, and a
glory
Like them you'll see painted sometimes in a story,
Breathed out from her skin ; and I saw her no more
The child I had always thought her before,
But wrapped in the glory, and wrapped in the hair,

Every inch of a woman stood pantin there.
So I ups with my fist, as I was bound,
And I d——s his eyes, and I knocks him down,
But from that day by land and sea,
I loved her! oh, I loved her! my Betsy Lee!

It's a terrible thing is love—did you say?
Well, Edward, my lad, I'll not say nay.
But you don't think of that when the young heart
blows
Leaf by leaf, comin out like a rose,
And your sheets is slacked off, and your blood is a
prancin,
And the world seems a floor for you to dance on.
Terrible—eh? yes, yes! you're right,
But all the same, it's God's own light.
Aw, there was somethin worth lovin in her—

As neat as a bird and as straight as a fir ;
And I've heard them say, as she passed by,
It was like another sun slipped into the sky—
Kind to the old and kind to the young,
With a smile on her lip, and a laugh on her tongue,
With a heart to feel, and a head to choose,
And she stood just five feet four in her shoes.
Oh, I've seen her look—well, well, I'll stop it !
Oh, I've seen her turn—well, well, then ! drop it !
Seen, seen ! What, what ! All under the sod
The darlin lies now—my God ! my God !

All right, my lads ! I shipped that sea ;
I couldn help it ! Let be ! let be !
Aw them courtin times ! Well it's no use tryin
To tell what they were, and time is flyin.
But you know how it is—the father pretendin

He never sees nothin, and the mother mendin,
Or a grippin the Bible, and spellin a tex,
And a eyin us now-and-then over her specs.
Aw they were a decent pair enough them two !
If it was only with them I'd had to do.
Bless me ! the larned he was in the flowers !
And how he would talk for hours and hours
About diggin and dungin, and weedin and seedin,
And sometimes a bit of a spell at the readin ;
And Betsy and me sittin back in the chimley,
And her a clickin her needles so nimbly,
And me lookin straight in ould Anthony's face,
And a stealin my arm round Betsy's wais'.
Aw the shy she was ! But when Anthony said
" Now, childher ! it's time to be goin to bed "—
Then Betsy would say, as we all of us riz,
" I wonder what sort of a night it is ;"

Or—"Never mind, father! I'll shut the door;"
And shut it she did, you may be sure;
Only the way she done it, d'ye see?
I was outside, but so was she!

Ah, then was the time! just a minute! a minute!
But bless me the sight of love we put in it!
Ah, the claspin arms! ah, the stoopin head!
Ah, the kisses in showers! ah, the things that
we said!

And when—now, Bob, I know what you're at—
Oh, God in heaven! not that! not that!
I know what you're thinkin I know your surt,
Your trollopin madams, and all that dirt.
I know the lot with their cheeks so pink,
And their eyes a swimmin and blazin with drink,
With blackguard talk for whoever they meet,

And a squealin and scuttlin about the street :

I know their laugh too—aw I know it well—

The sort of a laugh you might laugh in hell.

Oh yes ! they can laugh, but just you mind them,

And you'll see the divil that's grinnin behind them.

Now listen, Bob ! and listen you, Jem !

Did you think that Betsy was like one of them ?

Like one of *them* ! why that's what you'd wish !

Well there's chaps that's straight like a cuttle-fish :

For though the water be clear and blue

As the heaven above, they'll manage to brew

Some stuff in their brains, or their lights, or their gall,

Or the Divil knows where that'd muddy it all.

No, no ! my lads ! that's not what I meant—

Innocent ! Innocent ! Innocent !

Aw, I'll say it ; aw, I'll swear it, and swear it again

For ever and ever and ever—Amen.

Now avast, my lads, with chaffin and smut,
And I'll tell you my notion of an innocent fut.
For it's no use the whole world talkin to me,
If I'd never seen nothin of Betsy Lee
Except her foot, I was bound to know
That she was as pure as the driven snow.
For there's feet that houlds on like a cat on a roof,
And there's feet that thumps like an elephant's hoof ;
There's feet that goes trundlin on like a barra
And some that's crooky, some as straight as an arra ;
There's feet that's thick, and feet that's thin,
And some turnin out, and some turnin in ;
And there's feet that can run, and feet that can walk,
Aye, feet that can laugh, and feet that can talk—
But an innocent fut—it's got the spring
That you feel when you tread on the mountain ling ;
And it's tied to the heart, and not to the hip,

And it moves with the eye, and it moves with the lip.

I suppose it's God that makes when He wills

Them beautiful things—with the lift of His hills,

And the waft of His winds, and His calms and His
storms,

And His work and His rest ; and that's how He forms

A simple wench to be true and free,

And to move like a piece of poethry.

Well, a lass is a lass, and a lad is a lad ;

But now for the luck ould Anthony had.

For one ev'rin, as I was makin the beach,

I heard such a hollabaloo and a screetch

That I left the boat there as she was, and I ran

Straight up to the houses, and saw the whole clan

Of neighbours a crowdin at Anthony's door,

For most of the boats was landed before,

And some pressin in, and some pressin out ;
So I axed a woman what it was all about ;
And " Didn ye hear the news ? " says she ;
" It's a fortin that's come to ould Anthony Lee."
Then she tould me about the Lawyer chap,
That was in with them there, and his horse and his
trap,
And his papers " with seals as big as a skate "—
Bless me ! how them women loves to prate !
And " a good-lookin man he was," she said,
" As you might see ! and a gentleman bred ;
And he's talkin that nice, and that kind, and that free !
And it's a fortin he's got for ould Anthony Lee !"

So I said—" All right !" but I felt all wrong ;
And I turned away, and I walked along
To a part of the shore, where the wreck of a mast

Stuck half of it out, and half of it fast.
And a knife inside of me seemed to cut
My heart from its moorins, and heaven shut
And locked, and barred, like the door of a dungeon,
And me in the trough of the sea a plungin,
With the only land that I knew behind me,
And a driftin where God himself couldn find, me.
So I made for the mast, but before I got at it
I saw Betsy a standin as straight as a stattit,
With her back to the mast, and her face to the water,
And the strain of her eyes gettin tauter and tauter,
As if with the strength of her look she'd try
To draw a soul from the dull dead sky.
Then I went to her, but what could I say?
For she never took her eyes away :
Only she put her hand on my cheek,
And I tried, and I tried hard enough to speak,

But I couldn't—then all of a sudden she turned,
And the far-off look was gone, and she yearned
To my heart, and she said—"You doubted me ;"
And I said—"I didn't then, Betsy Lee !"

So her and me sat down on the mast,
And we talked and talked, and the time went fast,
When I heard a step close by, and—behold ye !
There was the Lawyer chap I tould ye
Had come with the papers (confound the pup !),
And says he—"I'm sorry to interrupt,"
He says, "such a pleasant têttertête ;
But you'll pardon me ; it's gettin' late,
And I couldn't think of returnin' to town
Without payin' my respects, as I feel bound,
To the lovely heiress, and off'rin' her ——,"
And cetterer, and cetterer—

You know how they rattles on. So we rose,
And all the three of us homeward goes.
But blest if he didn't buck up, and says he,
With a smirk, "Will you take my arm, Miss Lee?"
And Betsy didn't know what to do,
So she caught a hould, and there them two
Goes linkin' along. Aw, I thought I'd split
With laughin', and then I cussed a bit.
And when we come up to the houses—the rushin'
There was to the doors, and Betsy blushin',
And him lookin' grand, and me lookin' queer,
And the women sayin—"What a beautiful pair!"
Now it mattered little to me that night
What stuff they talked, for I knew I was right
With Betsy; but still, you see, of a rule,
A fellow doesn't like to look like a fool.
And the more I thought of the chap and his beauin,

The madder I got ; so when he was goin,
And I held the horse, and gave him the reins,
And—"There's a sixpence," says he, "for your pains—
A sixpence, my man !" I couldn hould in,
And once I began I did begin,
And I let him have it *hot*, as they say ;
But he only laughed, and druv away.
And they all of them laughed to hear me swear ;
But Betsy—of course she wasn there.

Now heave ahead, my lads, with me !
For the weeks rolled on, and ould Anthony Lee
Did just what he always wanted to do,
For he took a farm they called the *Brew*,
In a hollow that lay at the foot of a hill,
Where the blessed ould craythur might have his fill
Of stockin and rearin and grassin and tillage,

And only about a mile from the village.

And a stream ran right through the orchard, and then

Went dancin and glancin down the glen,

And soaked through the shilly, and out to the bay,

But never forgot, as it passed, to say,

With the ringin laugh of its silv'ry flow—

“She's thinkin of you, and she tould me so.”

Laugh on, my hearties ! you'll do no harm ;

But I've stood when the wind blew straight from the
farm,

And I've felt her spirit draw nigher and nigher,

Till it shivered into my veins like fire,

And every ripple and every rock

Seemed swep' with the hem of Betsy's frock.

A blessed ould fool ? very well ! very well !

But a blessed ould fool's got a story to tell,

And a blessed ould fool must have his own way,
For a song is a song, and a say is a say.
But maybe there's none of you wants any more !
Oh yes ! Bob Williams ! I heard you snore !
Or was it a pig with a twist in his snout ?
Take a rope's-end, Bill ! and hit him a clout !
But—of coorse ! of coorse—Ah little Sim !
Is he off ? little lad ! just fist us the glim !
Ah, beauty ! beauty ! no matter for him !
No matter for him ! Aw, isn he gud ?
With his nose like a shell, and his mouth like a bud !
There's sauce enough in that there lip
To aggravate ever a man in the ship.
Did ye hear him to-day agate of his chaff ?
Well ! how he made the skipper laugh !
Just come here and look at him, mates !
Isn he like them things up the Straits ?

Them picthurs the Romans has got in their chapels ?

Brave little chaps, with their cheeks like apples !

Holdin on to their mawthers' petticoats,

And lookin as spunky and bould as goats !

Bless me ! the body them craythurs has got !

Clean ! without a speck or a spot !

And they calls the little boy Jesus, and her

With her head wrapped up in a handkecher

They calls the Vargin, and all them starts

And patterin-nostrin, and—bless their hearts !

What is he dreaming of now, little lad !

Brother and sister and mother and dad ?

And lobsters a creepin about the creel,

And granny hummin her spinnin-wheel ?

Or him in the parlour a lyin in bed,

And a twiggin the spiders over-head ?

“ Hushee-bow-babby upon the tree-top !

And when the wind blows the cradle will rock—”

Ah Simmy my boy, I’ve done my best—

Somethin like that—but as for the rest——

Leave the hammock alone now, Dick, and be civil!

But he raelly is a purty young divil.

“Go on! go on!” Is that your shout?

Well, what is this I was thinkin about?

I’m in for it now, and it’s no use bilkin—

Oh, aye! the milkin! ould Anthony’s milkin!

I never thought on for the whys or the hows,

But I was always terrible fond of cows.

Now aren’t they innocent things—them bas’es?

And havn they got ould innocent faces?

A strooghin their legs that lazy way,

Or a standin as if they meant to pray—

They’re that sollum and lovin and studdy and wise,

And the butter meltin in their big eyes !
Eh ? what do you think about it, John ?
Is it the stuff they're feedin on—
The clover and meadow-grass and rushes,
And them goin pickin among the bushes,
And sniffin the dew when it's fresh and fine,
The sweetest brew of God's own wine !
And the smell of the harbs gets into their sows,
And works and works, and rowls and rowls,
Till it tightens their tits and drabs their muzzle—
Well, it's no use o' talkin—it's a regular puzzle :
But you'll notice the very people that's got to atten'
To the like, is generally very aisy men.

Aw ould Anthony knew about them pat,
Alderney, Ayreshire, and all to that !
And strippin and rearin, and profit and loss—

Aw, he was a clever ould chap, ould Anthony was.
More by token that's the for
Him and me had our first war.
You see, I was sittin there one night
When who should come in but ould Tommy Tite?
Tight he was by name and by nathur,
A dirty ould herpocrite of a craythur,
With a mouth that shut with a snick and a snap—
Tight for sure like the Divil's own trap ;
And his hair brushed up behind and before—
Straight like the bristles that's on a boar.
Well, that man was thin ! I never saw thinner,
A lean, ould, hungry, mangy sinner !
Hitched up all taut on the edge of his chair—
And his guts stowed away with him—well, God knows
where.
And he'd sit and he'd talk ! well, the way he'd talk !

And he'd groan in his innards, and retch and hawk—
And—"Scuse me!" he'd say, "it's my stemmick,
marm!"

And wasn it him that owned the farm?
And of coorse ould Anthony made a fuss
About him, but I didn care a cuss.

Well, there they were talkin and talkin away
About carrots and turmits, and oats and hay—
And stock and lock and barrel, bless ye!
The big words they had was enough to distress ye!
With their pipes in each other's faces smookin,
And me lookin and longin, and longin and lookin—
Lookin for Betsy's little signs—
The way them pretty craythurs finds
To talk without talkin, is raelly grand—
A tap of the fut, a twitch of the hand!

A heise of the neck, a heave of the breast !
A stoop like a bird upon its nest !
A look at father, a look at mawther !
A one knee swingin over the other !
A lookin lower, and a lookin higher !
A long, long straight look into the fire !
A look of joy, and a look of pain !
But bless ye ! you understand what I mean.
So on they talked till all the fun
In her darlin little face begun
To work—and I couldn hould it in,
And I laughed, and I laughed like anythin'.
My goodness ! the mad ould Anthony got,
With his eyes so wide, and his cheeks as hot,
And as red as a coal ; and the other fellow
Was turnin green and turnin yellow ;
And the ould woman bucked up as proud as you plaze,

But ould Anthony spoke, and says he, he says—

“It’s most unfortnit—I hope you will—

I mean it’s most disrespectful——

But I hope’s Mither Tite as you’ll excuse—

“And so he went on with his parley-voos—

“Just a young man from the shore,” says he,

“As drops in in the ev’rin for company!

A umble neighbour as don’t know batther,

You see, Mither Tite, I knew his father.”

Well I choked that down, but I says to myself—

Pretendin to stare at the plates on the shelf—

“You’ve got me, ould man! but I’ll owe you one

For that, before the stakes is drawn.”

But it’s my belief, that from that day,

He never liked me anyway.

“But about the milkin?” all right! all right!

I'm nearly as bad as ould Tommy Tite !
Spinnin round and round and round,
And never a knowin where am I bound.
Well, mostly every ev'rin, you see,
I was up at the milkin, with Betsy Lee.
For when she was milkin, she was always singin ;
I don't know what was it—may be the ringin
Of the milk comin tearin into the can,
With a swilsh and a swelsh and a tantaran,
A makin what the Lawyer gent
Was callin a sort of *accompliment*.
But the look of a cow is enough to do it,
And her breath, and her neck, the way she'll strew
it—
As if she was sayin, the patient she stud.
“Milk away ! it's doin me gud.”
And the sun goin down, and the moon comin up,

And maybe you takin a little sup,
And the steam of the hay, and your forehead pressin,
Agin her round side ! but for all it's a blessin
When they're nice and quiet, for there's some of
 them rough,
And kicky and pushy and bould enough.

Now Betsy would sing and I would hear,
And away I'd be like a hound or a deer,
Up the glen and through the sedges,
And bless me the way I took the hedges !
For I'd be wantin to get in time to the place
To see the last sunlight on Betsy's face.
And when I'd be gettin a-top of the brew
Where ould Anthony's house was full in view,
Then I'd stop and listen till I'd got it right,
And answer it back with all my might.

And when I come down, she'd say—"I heard!
You're for all the world like a mockin-bird."
She had her fun! aw, she had her fun!
And I'd say—"Well, Betsy, are you nearly done?"
And I'd kiss her, and then she'd say—"What bother!"
And the cow lookin round like a kind ould mawther.
One cow they had—well of all the sense
That ever I saw, and the imperence!
God bless me! the lek of yandhar ould mailie!
A brown cow she was—well raelly! raelly!
She's made me laugh till I abslit shoutit—
Pretendin to know all about it.

Well, one ev'rin I'd been laughin like a fool,
And Betsy nearly fallin off the stool—
In the orchard we were, and the apple blossom
Was shreddin down into Betsy's bosom.

And I was pickin them out, d'ye see?
And the cow was lookin and smilin at me,
When—creak went the gate, and who should appear
But Misther Richard Taylor, Esqueer!
That's the Lawyer chap—and says he,
“Plasantly engaged, Miss Lee!”
So Betsy was all of a twitter lek,
And she catched her handkecher round her neck,
And straightened her hair, and smoothed her brat,
And says—“Good everin!” just like that.

Well, I hardly knew what to do or to say,
So I just sat down, and milked away.
But Betsy stood up to him like a man,
Goodness! how that girl's tongue ran!
Like the tick of a watch, or the buzz of a reel,
And hoity-toity! and quite genteel—

Rattle-rattle—the talk it kem,
Oh, hoky-poky ! Jerusalem !
Now I didn mind her bein civil,
But she seemed so pleased to see the divil.
Aw, I might have been a thousand miles away—
Of coorse ! of coorse ! I know what you'll say—
But I couldn stand it—so I watched my chance,
And I turned the tit, and I gave it him once,
A right good skute betwix the eyes—
Aw, murder ! murder ! what a rise !
With the milk all streamin down his breast,
And his shirt and his pins and all the rest,
And a bran new waistcoat spoiled, and him splutt'rin,
And a wipin his face, and mutt'rin—mutt'rin —
And at last he says—"I shall go," says he,
"And kermoonicate this to Misther Lee."
"Aw, Tom !" says Betsy ; "Aw, Betsy !" says I :

"Whatever!" says she, and she begun to cry.

"Well," I says, "it's no wonder o' me,

With your ransy-tansy-tissimitee."

But we soon made it up, and it was gettin late,
And again I heard the garden gate.

"There!" says I, "he's goin: so now, little missis!"

And kisses, kisses, kisses, kisses!

"Take care!" says she; "Never fear!" I said;

Yes, a fool! an ould fool! but she loved me, Ned.

So I cleared the fence, and the stream, and the
pebbles

Chimin all night with their little trebles,

And tenors and bassers down at the fall,

Answerin back with a kindly call

(She used to tell me it sent her to sleep)

(Just at the dam it was middlin deep);

And I crossed the glen, and I took a short cut,
And all at once I heard a fut.
I guessed it was him, and I was right,
With his boots goin winkin through the night.
“Good night!” says I. “Good night!” says he.
“And what did you tell ould Anthony Lee?”
Aw, then he begun, and he cussed and he swore,
The divil behind, and the divil before—
And all what he’d do—and he’d have the law—
And “if it hadn been—” “Come, stop that jaw!”
Have it out! have it out, Misther Taylor!” says I;
“Here we are under God’s own sky.
Have it out like a man, if it’s a man you are!
Have it out! have it out, my lad! if you dare;
And don’t stand there like a blue baboon.
With your long teeth chatterin in the moon!”
“Not if I knows it!” says he, “Tom Baynes.

No ! no !" says he, "I've other means."

"Have ye?" says I, and I grips the seat

Of his trousis, and sends him over a gate.

I didn know what he meant—good Lord !

But he kep' his word ! he kep' his word !

This was in spring, and the summer come,

And, behold ye ! my gentleman still was dumb,

For he maybe thought about that spree

The less said the better for he.

For he's one of them chaps that works in the dark,

And creeps and crawls—is a Lawyer's clerk ;

And digs and digs, and gives no sign,

Spreadin sods and flowers at the mouth of his mine ;

And he'll lay his train, and he'll hould his match,

And he'll wait and he'll wait, and he'll watch and

he'll watch,

Till the minute comes, and before you sneezes
You're up to heaven in a hundred pieces.
Aw, it's a bitter poison—that black art.
The lie that eats into your heart ;
A thing gath'rin round you like a seine
Round the fish, and them never feelin the strain ;
A squall comin tippytoe off the land,
And houldin its breath till it's close at hand,
And whisp'rin to the winds to keep still
Till all is ready—and then with a will,
With a rush and a roar they sweeps your deck,
And there you lies a shiv'rin wreck.

Well, winter come, and then the cows
Was goin a milkin in the house.
And if you want peace and quietness,
It's in a cow-house you'll get it the best.

For the place is so warm, and their breath is so
sweet,

And the nice straw bedding about their feet,

And hardly any light at all,

But just a dip stuck on to the wall;

And them yocked in the dark as quiet as ghos'es,

And a feelin for each other's noses.

And, bless me! sometimes you'd hardly be knowin

It was them, excep' for their chewin and blowin.

Aw, many a time I've felt quite queer

To see them standin so orderly there.

Is it the Lord that makes them so still?

Aw, I like them craythurs terrible!

Aye, aye! the sea for the leks of us!

It's God's own work (though treacherous!);

But for peace and rest and that—d'ye see?

Among the cows is the place for me.

And *lastly*, as the Pazons is sayin, it's there
You'll have your gel, if anywhere—
All your own among the hay,
Wrapped in your arms! and the things that she'll
say?

And the things that she'll do, you could hardly tell
Before that she loved you half as well.

At least lek that's what Betsy done—
(Ah, no! my lads, avast your fun!)—
Speakin so soft and speakin so low,
Or speakin nothin at all, you know;
Or singin hymns, no matter what,
"Gentle Jesus," and the like o' that.
And that's the way she was one night,
Pressed to my heart as tight as tight—
"Sing *Glory be!*" the darlin said,

"And then it'll be time to be goin to bed"—

When all of a sudden at the door

Come a clatt'rin of clogs, and there for sure

Stood Peggy, the sarvant, all out o' breath,

And, "You're wanted," says she, "Miss Elizabeth!"

So I got up, and I was goin too;

"Aw, no!" says Peggy, "that'll never do!"

And she went—and she went—and my heart gev a
shever—

And I never saw her again! no never! never!

Well! well! well! well!—What ails the ship?

Hold on! hold on! I got a grip.

Who's at the helm? Is it Juan Cronin?

With all this criss-crossin and herrin-bonin!

My patience! or is it Tommy Teare?

That's a tervil onasy fellow to steer

Have another pipe ? Why, thank you, Eddart,
You're a feelin lad, and I allis said it.
Yes, give me the can ! I'll just take a swipe—
Aye ! another pipe—another pipe—
And, Eddart my lad, was that a letter
You got from home ? Is your father better ?
Is your mother hearty ? I knew her well,
A nice little sthuggha of a gel !
And, Eddart, whenever you'll be goin to write,
Tell them I was axin (I've got a light)
How were they. And, Eddart, mind you'll put in
If ould Tommy Tite's lookin after the tin,
And if the herrins was plenty this year,
And is the gaery drained, d'ye hear ?
And have ould Higgison rose the rent ?
Aw, Eddart and me is well acquent.

Well, well ! I didn know what was up,
Nor whether to go, nor whether to stop.
So I waited a bit, and I took off my shoes,
And, thinks I, the ould people's gone to roos' ;
And maybe she's waitin all alone,
And wond'rin and wond'rin am I gone.
And I looked and I looked, and I crossed the street
As quiet as a mouse in my stocking-feet,
And I crep' in among the honey-suckles
At the porch, and I gave a tap with my knuckles,
Just this way, when the door gave a flirt,
And there stood ould Anthony in his shirt—
Hard and keen, and his ould bald head
Like Sammil when he was riz from the dead—
In the Bible, you know, yes ! just the sem,
Isaac and Peter and the like of them,
That's allis got conks like turkey's eggs,

And the wind blowin' free round their blessed old legs,

Enough to frecken you in the night,

He was so awful and big and white.

And says he, "I thought it was you that was

knockin—

Oh it's very shockin! it's very shockin!"

"What's shockin?" I says; "Oh" he says, "it's

no use

Pretendin, young man!" "Well why the deuce,"

Says I, "can't you give the thing a name?"

"Oh raelly," says he, "for shame! for shame!"

And "it's could," he says, "and I think I'll go in—

Oh it's an awful sin! an awful sin!"

"Sin," says I, "well, whatever it is,

Who tould you this! who tould you this?"

"Misther Taylor," he says, "Misther Taylor!" says I;

"Oh indeed!" then he tould me why,

And all about it, how Jenny Magee
Had come home, and laid a child to me—
And “Nice purseedins,” he says, “indeed !”
And—*who was I ?* and the beggarly breed
The lot of us was, and—*how dar I*, says he,
How dar I look up to Betsy Lee ?
“Is he here ?” I says ; “Nø ! no !” “That’s well !
Thank God ! thank God ! for by heaven and hell,
If I had caught him in the wud,
The sun would have risen upon his blood.”
“Oh !” says he, quite freckened lek,
“What shockin feelins !” and—*Could I expec’ ?*—
And—*did I raelly mean ?*—and before I could say
This or that, he was in, and turned the key.

Aw, up to that I was proud enough,
Bould as a lion, and middlin rough ;

But left there alone, that sore distressed,
All the strength of the night come upon me and
pressed

And forced me down till I fell on my knees,

And I heard the moan of the long dead seas

Far away rollin in on the shore,

And I called to ould Anthony through the door—

“Aw, listen to me! aw, listen to me!

Aw, Mither Lee! aw, Mither Lee!

He’s bought that woman,” I said, “he’s bought her

To swear that lie; and it’s after your daughter

He is himself! aw, listen to me!

Aw, Mither Lee! aw, Mither Lee!”

Not a word! not a word!—“It’s a lie,” I cried,

“It’s a lie, if on the spot I died;

So help me God, sir, it is a lie!”

Never a word or a sound of reply!

"Aw, Misther Lee!" I says, "can I see her?"

Aw, Misthress Lee! are *you* up there?

Let me see Betsy? she'll belave me!

Let me see Betsy! Save me! save me!

She hears me now, and her heart is broke!"

I said, and I listened, but no one spoke.

"She's dyin! you're stoppin her mouth!" I said;

"You're houldin her down upon the bed!

Aw, you'll answer for this at the day of doom!

You're smotherin her there in the little room!

Betsy! Betsy! my darlin love!

Betsy! Betsy! oh Father above!"

And then I fell right forrid, and lay

Quite stupid, how long I cannot say;

But the first thing I felt when I tried to stand

Was something soft a slickin my hand.

And what do ye think it was but Sweep!
The ould black coly that minded the sheep!
“God bless ye!” says I, “I’ve a friend in you!”
And he was a middlin sulky craythur too.
So I dragged myself up, and picked a bit
Of the honey-suckle, and buried it
In my breast, and I wandered round and round,
But not a mossel of light could be found,
I was like a drunken man the way I staggered,
And across the street, and through the haggard,
And into the fields, and I know nothing more
Till they found me in the mornin upon the shore.

Well he was a villyan anyway?

He was a villyan—did you say?

A villyan!—Will you cuss him, Bill?

Aye, cuss your fill, boy, cuss your fill!

A villyan—eh ? but before I'm done

You'll know something more about him, my
son.

Now, men, what was I to do ? can ye tell ?

Just leave it alone ? aye—maybe as well !

But I never would strike my flag to a lie

Before I knew good reason why.

No, no ! my lads ! it's not in my blud—

I never did, and I never wud.

But ye see I was only a youngster then,

And didn know much of the ways of men.

Beside the shame ! God bless ye ! the shamed

I was to think that the lek should be named.

For that's the worst of a divil still—

You'll be ashamed, but he never will ;

And you'll be in the doldrums under his lee,

With the breeze took out of your sails, but he !

Aw, he'll hould his luff, and lay his head well
To the wind, and look in the eye of hell.

Well, I thought and I thought till at last a plan
Come into my head, and—"That's the man!"
I says—"The Pazon!—I'll go to him,
And I'll know the worst of it, sink or swim."
So I claned myself, and I had a draw
Of the pipe, and I went, but middlin slaw,
For my head was workin uncommon hard
All the way, and I didn regard
For nothing at all, and the boats comin round
The Stack, a beatin up for the ground,
And a Rantipike schooner caught in the tide.
And a nice little whole-sail breeze outside,
Not much matter to me you'd 'spec—
No ! but you'll allis be noticin lek.

Now the grandest ould pazon, I'll be bail,
That ever was, was ould Pazon Gale.
Aw, of all the kind and the good and the true !
And the aisy and free, and—" How do you do :
And how's your mother, Tom, and—the fishin ?
Spakin that nice, and allis wishin
Good luck to the boats, and—" How's the take ?"
And blessin us there for Jesus' sake.
And many a time he'd come out and try
A line, and the keen he was, and the spry !
And he'd sit in the stern, and he'd tuck his
tails,
And well he knew how to handle the sails.
And sometimes, if we were smookin, he'd ax
For a pipe, and then we'd be turnin our backs,
Lettin on never to see him, and lookin
This way and that way, and him a smookin

Twis' as strong and as black as tar,
And terrible sollum and regular.
Bless me ! the sperrit that was in him too,
Houldin on till all was blue !
And only a little man, but staunch,
With a main big heart aback of his paunch !
Just a little round man—but you should ha' seen him.

agate

Of a good-sized conger or a skate :
His arms as stiff, and his eye afire,
And every muscle of him like wire.

But avast this talk ! What ! what did you say ?
Tell us more about the Pazon—eh ?
Well, well ! he was a pazon—yis !
But there's odds of pazons, that's the way it is.
For there's pazons now that's mortal proud,

And some middlin humble, that's allowed.

And there's pazons partikler about their clothes,

And rings on their fingers, and bells on their

toes :

And there's pazons that doesn know your names,

"Shut the gate, my man!" and all them games.

And there's pazons *too* free—I've heard one

cuss

As hard and as hearty as one of us.

But Pazon Gale—now I'll give you his size,

He was a simple pazon, and lovin and wise.

That's what he was, and quiet uncommon,

And never said much to man nor woman ;

Only the little he said was meat

For a hungry heart, and soft and sweet,

The way he said it : and often talkin

To hisself, and lookin down, and walkin.

Now there's some of them pazons they're allis
shoutin,

And tearin at you, and ravin and routin,

And they gets you pinned with a lot of others

In a coop, and they calls you sisthers and
brothers ;

And you can't get out, so the beggars raises

Their vice, and gives it you like blazes.

What's the good of all that surt !

Sweatin and actin and bustin their shirt ;

Shiverin the verry roof to splanthers—

I never liked them roaring ranthers.

Yes! our pazon was quiet, but, mind ye! don't
doubt

But the same man knew well what was he about.

Aye, many a time I've seen his face

All slushed with tears, and him tellin of *grace*

And *mercy* and that, and his vice so low,
But trimblin—aw, we liked him though !

And he wasn livin above the bay
Where I was livin, but a bit away,
Over the next, and betwix the two
The land ran out to a point, and a screw
Of the tide set in on the ~~rocks~~, and there
He'd stand in the mornin, and listen to hear
The dip of our oars comin out, and the jealous
We were of the Derbyhaven fellows !
And the way we'd pull to try which would be fuss !
And "Pazon !" we'd say, "are you comin with
us ?"
And the Derbyhaven chaps would call—
And the way he'd smile and say nothing at all !
Well, that's the Pazon, you'll understand,

Aye, the very man, the very man.

Aw, if I once get agate of him—

But some night again, if I'll be in the trim,

I'll maybe be tellin you more, if so be

You'll be carin to listen, and all agree.

Well, the Pazon was walkin on the gravel—

My conscience! the slow that man did travel!

Backwards and forrards, and stoppin and thinkin,

And a talkin away to hisself like winkin ;

And a pickin a flower, or a kickin a stone,

There he was anyway all alone.

And I felt like a reglar blund'rin blockit,

And I stowed the quid in my waistcoat pocket,

And I said, " Here goes! I don't care a fardin,"

And I opened the gate, and into the garden.

And—" Pazon!" I says, " I've come to you."

"Is it true, Tom Baynes?" he says, "is it true?"
And he looked—"No it isn't!" I said, quite pale;
"So you needn't look that way, Pazon Gale!
It isn't true!" So the ould man smiled,
And says he, "Well, don't be angry, child!"
Child he called me—d'ye see? d'ye see?
Child!—and he takes my hand, and says he,
"I suppose you've got a yarn to spin:
Come in, Tom Baynes, come in, come in!"
So in we went, and him smilin like fun,
Into the parlour; but the Misthress run
Quite shamed lek, a whiskeen through the door,
And droppin her things upon the floor.
And the sarvant keeked over the landin-top—
A dirty trouss, with her head like a mop—
And she gurned like a cat, but I didn't care,
Though they're middlin spiteful them craythurs are.

So I tould the Pazon all that I had,
And he says, "God bless ye! God bless ye! my
lad!"

Aw, it's himself that knew my very soul,

And me so young, and him so oul'.

And all the good talk! and never fear—

And leave it to him, and he'd bring me clear—

And Anthony wanted talkin to—

And on with the hat—and away he'd go—

And *young Mither Taylor (a son of ould Dan !)*

Was a very *intelligent* young man.

"Aisy! Pazon," says I, and he went;

And all the road home—"in-tel-li-gent"—

I said, "what's that?" some pretty name

For a — deng it! these pazons just like crame,

They're talkin that smooth—aw, it's well to be civil—

"A son of ould Dan's!" and Dan was a divil.

That was a Monday ; a Thursday night
The Pazon come, and bless me the fright
The ould woman was in, and wipin the chair,
And nudgin and winkin—"Is Thomas there?"
He says—"Can I see him?" So up I got,
And out at the door, and I put a knot
On my heart, like one of you, when he takes
A turn and belays, and houlds on till it breaks.
And—"Well?" I says—then he looked at me,
And "Have you your pipe, Thomas?" says he ;
"Maybe you'd better light it," he said,
"It's terrible good to study the head."
And he wouldn't take rest till I had it lit ;
And he twisses, and twisses, and—"Wait a bit!"
He says, and he feels, and "We're all alone,"
Says he, and behould ye! a pipe of his own.
And "I'll smook too," he says ; and he charges,

And puffs away like Boanarges.

I never knew the like was at him afore:

And so we walked along the shore.

And if he didn behove to spin a yarn

About the stars—and Aldebarn,

And Orion—and just to consedher

The grand way God had put them together,

And wasn it a good world after all,

And—what was man—and the Bible—and Paul—

Till I got quite mad, and I says—"That'll do!

Were you at the Brew, Pazon? were you at the
Brew?"

Aw, then it all come out, and the jaw

Ould Anthony had, and the coorts, and the law;

And—*Jane Magee and her mother both—*

He had gone there twice, but she stuck to her
oath—

And—*what could he do?* “I’m going,” says I—
“Keep up your heart now!” “I’ll try, I’ll try.”
“Good night, and mind you’ll go straight to bed!
God bless ye, Tom!” “And you, sir!” I said.
“Come up in the mornin! Good night! good night!
Now mind you’ll come!” “All right! all right!”

And it’s into the house, and “Mawther,” I says,
“I’m off.” “What’s off?” says, she, “if you plaze!
Off! what off!” says she, “you slink!”
And she was sharplin a knife upon the sink,
And she flung it down, and she looked that way—
Straight and stiff; and “What did you say?
Off! off where?” and the sting of a light
Snapped quick in her eye—“All right! all right!”
I says, and away to the chiss I goes—
“Stand by!” I cried, “I want my clothes;”

And I hauled them out—aw, she gev a leap,
And “Lave them alone!” she says, “you creep!”
And she skutched them up, and she whisked about
As lithe as an eel, and still lookin out
Over her shouldher, and eyein me,
Like a flint, or some dead thing—“Let be,
Mawther,” I says, “let go! you’d batther!”
Aw, then if she didn begin no matther!
And she threw the things upon the floor,
And she stamped them, and down on her knees, and
she toor,
And ripped, and ragged, and scrunched away,
Aw, hands and teeth,—I’ll be bound to say
Them shirts was eighteen pence the yard!
Rael good shirts! aw, the woman was hard.
Hard she was, and lusty, and strong—
I’ve heard them say when she was young,

She could lift a hundred-weight and more,
And there wasn a man in the parish could throw
her.

And as for shearin and pickin potatoes—
Aw, well, she bet all, and always as nate as
A pin, and takin a pride in it—
For there's some ould women, they're hardly fit,
They're that dirty and stupid, and messin and
muddin,

I wudn live with the like—No! I wudn!
But yandhar woman—asleep or awake—
Was a clane ould craythur and no mistake.
But hard—aw hard! for the ould man died,
And she looked, and she looked, but she never cried—
And him laid out, as sweet as bran,
And everything white,—like a gentleman.
And brass nails—bless ye! and none of your 'sterrits,

But proud in herself, and sarvin the sperrits.
And "Misthress Baynes now! was he prepared?"
"God knows!" says she—aw, the woman was hard.
But if you could have prised the hatches
Of that strong sowl, you would have seen the catches
She made at her heart, choked up to the brim,
And you'd ha' knew she was as dead as him. .
But mind me! from that very day
The woman's-juice, as you may say,
Was clean dried out of her, and she got
As tough and as dry, and as hard as a knot.
Hard—but handy, and goin still,
Not troublin much for good or ill;
Like the moon and the stars God only touched
Once long ago, and away they scutched;
And now He never minds them a bit,
But they keep goin on, for they're used of it.

Goin on ! Well she did go on that night,
And up from the floor, and her back to the light
Of the fire (it was burnin middlin low),
And the candle capsized, and she looked to grow
That big in the dark, and never a breath,
But standin there like the shadda of death—
Never a breath—for maybe a minute,
Just like a cloud with the thunder in it
Dark and still, till its powder-bags
Burst—and the world is blown to rags.
Aw, she gave it them with a taste—she did,
“And was it that flippity-flappity flid
Of a Betsy Lee ? and she knew well enough
What I’d come to at last with my milkin and stuff,
And sniffin about where I hadn no call,
And the lines hangin rottin upon the wall,
And the boat never moored, and grindin her bones

To sawdust upon the cobblin stones—

And the people talkin—And who were the Lees?

Who were they now after all, if you please?

Who were they to cock their nose?

And Lee's ould wife with her strings and her bows,

And her streamers and trimmins, and pippin and
poppin

Her d——d ould head like a hen with a toppin!"

Did she cuss? aye, she cussed, and it's a rael bad
hearin,

Mind ye! a woman cussin *or* swearin—

Partikler your mawther—still for all it's true,

There's differin sorts of cussin too.

For there's cussin that comes down like fire from
heaven

Fierce and strong—like the blast that's driven

From the mouth of a seven-times heated furnace;

That's you see, when a man's in earnes'.
And there's cussin that's no use whatever,
Slibberin slobberin slushin slaver—
A fool's lips runnin with brimstone froth,
The muckin skum of the Devil's own broth.

“And had they forgot when they lived next
door?

A lazy lot, and as poor as poor—
And—*Misses Baynes ! the beautiful tay*
You've got—and I raelly think I'll stay—
And—*could you lend me a shillin till to-morrow ?*
And borrow, borrow, borrow, borrow.
Aye, and starvin, and him doin nothin for hours
But pokin about with his harbs and his flowers—
The lig-y-ma-treih ! the dirty ould bough !
And now it was *Misther Lee ! my gough !*

Misther and Misthress Lee in the gig—

Make way, good people!—aw, terrible big!

And would I demean myself to them?

You silly-billy! for shame! for shame!”

And at it again—“And what she would rather—

And me the very spit of my father!

And what *was* a bychild, if you come to that?

It wasn a dog, and it wasn a cat;

But a man’s own flesh, and the love and the life

Was in it—let be she wasn your wife—

And after all why shouldn she be?

She was a strappin wench was Jinny Magee,

And good at the work, and worth a hundred

Of your Betsy things—and why should we be
sundered?

And Jinny and her would agree, never fear her!”

Aw, she was despard though to hear her.

“Hush! mawther!” I says, “aw, mawther,
hush!”

And she turned to the fire, and I saw her brush
The tears from her eyes, and I saw the workin
Of her back, and her body jerkin, jerkin :
And I went, and I never said nothin lek,
But I put my arm around her neck,
And I looked in her face, and the shape and the
strent’,

And the very face itself had went
All into one, like a sudden thaw,
Slished and slushed, or the way you’ve saw
The water bubblin and swirlin around
The place where a strong man have gone down.

And I took her and put her upon the bed
Like a little child, and her poor ould head

On my breast, and I hushed her, and stroked her
cheek,

Talkin little talk—the way they speak
To babies—I did ! and d—— the shame !

Wasn it out of her I came ?

And I began to think of Absalun,

And David cryin “ My son, my son ! ”

And the moon come round, and the light shone in,

And crep’ on her face, and I saw the thin

She was, and the wore, and her neck all dried

And shrivelled up like strips of hide :

And I thought of the time it was as warm

And as soft as Betsy’s, and her husband’s arm

Around it strong and lovin, and me

A cuddled up, and a suckin free.

And I cried like Peter in the Testament,

When Jesus looked at him, and out he went,

And cried like a fool, and the cock a crowin,
But what there was in his heart there's no knowin.
And I swore by the livin God above
I'd pay her back, and love for love,
And keep for keep, and the wages checked,
And her with a note, and all correct.
Then I kissed her, and she never stirred ;
And I took ~~my~~ clothes, and, without a word,
I snicked the door, and by break o' the day
I was standing alone on Douglas quay.

I shipped foreign of coorse, and a fine ship too,
China bound, the *Waterloo*—
Captain Davis—the time I joined her—
“Carry-on Davis?” aye, I thought you'd mind her.
A tight little ship, and a tight little skipper—
Hadn we a race with the Liverpool clipper,

The *Marco Polo*, that very trip?
And it's my opinion that if that ship—
But never mind! she done her duty,
And the *Marco Polo* was a beauty—
But still—close-hauled, d'ye see? Well! well!
There's odds of ships, and who can tell?
That was my ship anyway,
And I was aboard her two years to a day,
And back though for all, and her a dischargin,
And the hands paid off, so you'll aisy imargine
The keen I was for home, and the tracks
I made right away, and no one to ax,
Nor nothing—"And surely hadn I heard
From nobody?" Bless ye! divil a word!

It was dark when I come upon the street,
And my heart hung heavy on my feet,

And—all turned in, but in the ould spot
A light was burnin still, and the hot
I felt, and the chokin, and over the midden,
And up to the pane—and her face half-hidden,
And her sure enough, and the ould arm-cheer,
And as straight as a reed, and terrible speer!
And the needles twinklin cheerily,
And a brave big book spread out on her knee,
The Bible—thinks I—and I was raelly plased,
For it's a great thing to get ould people aised
In their minds with the lek o' yandhar, and
tracks,
And hymns—it studdies them though, and slacks
Their sowls, and softens their tempers, and stops
Their coughin as good as any drops.
And if they don't understand what they're readin—
The poor ould things—it's a sort of feedin—

Chewin or suction—what's the odds?

One way's man's, and the other God's!

“But how about Betsy?” well, wait a bit!

How about her? aye that was it—

And what a man knows, you see he knows,

So I lifts the latch, and in I goes,

“Mawther!” I says—my God! the spring

She gev, and says she—“It's a scandalous thing,”

She says, “Comin back in their very closes!

And it's bad enough, but I'll have no ghoses!

Be aff!” says she, “be aff! be aff!”

Well, I raelly couldn help but laugh.

“I'm Thomas Baynes, your son!” I said;

“I'm not a ghost.” “And aren't you dead?”

“No!” I says, and I tuk and gev her a kiss:

“Is that like a ghost?” “Well, I can't say it is.”

"And—Betsy, mawther?" Aw, Christ, the look!

"Betsy, mawther?"—the woman shook;

And she spread her arms, and I staggered to her,

And I fell upon my knees on the floor;

And she wrapped my head in her brat—d'ye
hear?

For to see a man cryin is middlin queer:

And then, my mates, then—then I knew

What a man that's backed by the Divil can do.

For hadn this Taylor come one day,

And tould them I was drowned at sea?

And ould Anthony Lee, that might have knew
better,

Never axed to see the letter

Nor nothin, but talked about "Providence;"

And the men at the shore they hadn the sense;

And the Pazon as simple as a child,

And that's the way the villian beguiled
The lot of them, for they didn know
What to do or where to go,
As if there wasn no owners nor agent,
Nor Lloyd's, where they might have heard imma-
dient.

And Betsy, be sure, heard all before long,
They took care of that, and then ding-dong,
Night and day the ould people was at her—
And would she marry Taylor? and chitter-chatter!
And never a word from Betsy Lee
But "It cannot be! it cannot be!"
And thinner and thinner every day,
And paler and paler, I've heard them say;
And always doin the work and goin,
And early and late, and them never knowin,

For all they thought theirselves so wise,
That the gel was dyin under their eyes.
And—"Take advice, and marry him now!
A rael good husband anyhow."
And allis the one against the three—
And "It cannot be! it cannot be!"

One night he was there, and words ran high—
Ould Peggy was tellin—and "Let me die!"
She says—"let me die! let me die!" she said,
And they tuk her upstairs, and put her to bed,
And the Doctor come—I knew him well,
And he knew me—ould Doctor Bell—
A nice ould man, but hard on the drink,
And the fond of Betsy you wouldn think!
He used to say, but he'd never say more,
Her face was like one he'd seen afore.

Aw, that's the man that had supped his fill
Of troubles, mind ! but cheerful still.
And a big strong man ; and he'd often say
" Well, Thomas, my lad, and when's the day ? "
And " would I be axin him up to the feed ? "
The day indeed ! the day indeed !
So he went up all alone to see her,
For Betsy woul'n have nobody there,
Excep himself: and them that was standin
And houldin their breaths upon the landin
Could hear her talkin very quick,
And the Doctor's vice uncommon thick—
But what was said betwix them two
That time, there was none of them ever knew :
God knows, and *him* ; but they nither will tell ;
Aw, he was safe to trust was Doctor Bell.
But when he come down—" Is she raelly dyin ? "

Ould Anthony said ; but the Doctor was cryin.

And—" Doctor! Doctor! what can it be?"

" It's only a broken heart," says he ;

And—*he'd come again another day—*

And he tuk his glass and went away.

And when the winter time come round,

And the snow lyin deep upon the ground,

One mornin early the mother got up

To see how was she, and give her a sup

Of tea or the like—and—mates—hould on!

Betsy was gone! aye, Betsy was gone!

" Gentle Jesus, meek and mild!

Look upon a little child!

Pity my simplicity!

Suffer me to come to thee!"

That's the words I've heard her sing

When she was just a little prattlin thing—

And I raely don't think in my heart that
ever

She was different from that—no never!

Aw, He'd pity her simplicity!

A child to God! a woman to me!

"Gentle Jesus!" the sound is sweet,

Like you'll hear the little lammies bleat!

Gentle Jesus! well, well, well!

And once I thought—but who can tell!

Come! give us a drop of drink! the stuff

A man will put out when he's dry! that's enough!

To hear me talkin religion——eh?

You must have thought it strange?—*You didn—*
ye say?

You didn!—no!—d——n it! you didn—*you!*

Well, that'll do, my lads; that'll do, that'll do.

Well, of coorse the buryin—terrible grand,
And all in the papers you'll understand—
“Elizabeth, daughter of Anthony Lee
And Mary his wife—and twenty-three.”
But bless me! you've seen the lek afore—
And the Doctor waitin at the door,
And wantin somethin—and “Could I see her?”
And “Yes! aw yes!” and up the steer—
And he looked, and he looked—I've heard them
say—

Like a man that's lookin far away;
And he kissed her cheek, and he shut the lid,
That's what they tould me the Doctor did.

But, however, you musn suppose, my men,
That all this was tould me there and then—
Aw, I thought I'd somethin to tell ye, mind!

That wasn much in the spoony line—
No! no! the words ould mawther said
Was—"Betsy is dead, Tom; Betsy is dead!
And it's Taylor has kilt her anyway,
For didn he tell you were lost at sea!"
Nothin more—and up I sprung
To my feet, like a craythur that had been stung,
And I couldn see nothin but fire and blood,
And I reeled like a bullock that's got the thud
Of the slaughterer's hammer betwix his hurns,
And claps of light and dark by turns,
Fire and blood! fire and blood!
And round and round, till the blindin scud
Got thinner and thinner, and then I seen
The ould woman had hitched herself between
My arms, and her arms around my neck,
And waitin, waitin, and wond'rin lek.

Aw, I flung her off—"He'll die! he'll die!

This night, this very night," says I:

"He'll die before I'm one day ouldher;"

And I stripped my arm right up to the shouldher—

"Look here!" I says, "hesn God given

The strength?" I says, "and by Him in heaven,

And by her that's with him—hip and thigh!

He'll die this night, by G—— he'll die!"

"No! no!" says she, "no, Thomas, no!"

For I was at the door intarmined to go.

And she coaxed and coaxed, and "wouldn it be
better

To speak to him fuss, or to write a letter,

Or to wait my chance?" and all that stuff!

"And then I could kill him aisy enough."

"Aisy! that's not what I want at all,"

I says—"I'll stand on his body, and call

The people, and let them know right well
It's me that sent the villian to hell."
"And then you'll be hung," says she, and I laughed—
"Will you go to the Pazon?" "It's not his craft,"
I says; "the work I've got to do
Is no Pazon's work." "Would I go to the Brew?"
Aw, when she said that I made a run—
But she held me, and—"Oh my son! my son!"
And cryin and houldin on to me still—
"Will you go to the Pazon?" "Yes! I will,
If that'll give you any content."
Not another word, but away we went—
And her in the dark, a keepin a grip
Of my jacket for fear I'd give her the slip,
And a peggin away with her poor old bones,
And stumblin and knockin agin the stones—
And neither the good nor the bad was said,

And the one of us hadn a thing on our head—
And the rain it rained, and the wind it blew—
Aw, the woman was hard, but the woman was true.

“ Missis Baynes !” says the Pazon, “ Missis Baynes !

Missis Baynes !

Will you plase to tell me what this means ?”
And white as a sheet, and he cuts a caper,
And he drops the specs, and he drops the paper,
And backs and gets under the lee of a chair—
I'm blest if the Pazon didn look queer !
I raelly thought he was goin to fall—
And says mawther—“ He isn dead at all !
Don't be freckened !” and—holy Moses !
Wasn he paid to look after ghos'es ?
Aw, then the joy he took of me !
“ And the only one saved from the wreck !” says he ;

"There wasn no wreck—God d—— his eyes !
No wreck at all, but Taylor's lies !"
"For shame then ! Thomas !" and up she stud.
"Let him cuss !" says the Pazon, "it'll do him gud."
And the look he gev, and the sigh, and the sob !
And he saw in a minute the whole of the job.
And he tried to speak, but he wasn able,
And I laid my head upon the table—
Quite stupid lek, and then them two
Began to talk, and I hardly knew
What was it they said, but "the little drop !"
I heard, and "you'll 'scuse him," and "Woman, stop !
The lad is drunk with grief," he said,
And he come and put his hand on my head ;
And the poor old fingers as dry as chips !
And the pity a tricklin off their tips—
And makin me all as peaceable—

Aw, the Pazon was kind and lovin still !

Full of wisdom and love, and blessin,

Aw, it's kind and lovin was the Pazon !

So at last, ye see, whatever they had,

I didn say nothin, good or bad ;

And they settled betwix them what would I do,

And neither to go to the town nor the Brew,

" But off to sea again, aye straight !

And, if I could, that very night."

So they roused me up, and " Me and your
mawther"—

The Pazon says—" Aw, ye needn bother,"

Says I, " all right !" and then I'll be bail

I took it grand out of Pazon Gale—

" Now, Pazon," I says, " you know your man—

And a son of ould Dan's too ! a son of ould Dan !"

We were at the door just ready to go—

Aw, the Pazon couldn't help smilin' though—

A son of ould Dan's!—aye, just that way—

A son of ould Dan's!—eh? Billy! eh?

Well, I kept my word, and off at once,

And shipped on a coaster, owned in Penzance;

But it was foreign I wanted, so very soon

I joined the *Hector* bound for Rangoon.

Ah, mates! it's well for flesh and blood

To stick to a lass that's sweet and good,

Leastways if she sticks to you, ye know;

For then, my lads, blow high, blow low,

On the stormiest sea, in the darkest night,

Her love is a star that'll keep you right.

But there was no sun nor star for me—

Drinkin' and tearin' and every spree—

And if I couldn keep the divil under,
I don't think there's many of you will wonder.

Well, Divil or no, the *Hector* come home ;
We raced that trip with the *Flying Foam*,
And up the river the very same tide,
And the two of them berthed there side by side ;
A tight run that, and the whole of it stuck
In the paper—logs and all—good luck !
And the captain as proud, and me like a fool
Spreein away in Liverpool—
And lodgins of coorse, for I never could stand
Them Sailors' Homes, for a man is a man,
And a bell for dinner and a bell for tay,
And a bell to sing and a bell to pray,
And a bell for this and a bell for that,
And " Wipe your feet upon the mat !"

And the rules hung up ; and fined if you're late,

And a chap like a bobby shuttin the gate—

It isn't reasonable, it isn't :

They calls it a Home, I calls it a Prison.

Let a man go wherever he chooscs !

Ould mawther Higgins' the house that I uses—

Jem Higgins' widda—you'll be bound to know *her*—

Clane, but not partickiler.

There's Quiggin's too, next door but one,

Not Andrew, of coorse ! but Rumpy John—

She's a dacent woman enough is Nancy,

But Higginses allis tuk my fancy.

There's some comfort there, for you just goes in,

And down with the watch and down with the tin,

And sleepin and wakin, and eatin and drinkin—

And out and in, and never thinkin—

And carryin on till all is blue,

And your jacket is gone and your waistcoat too.

Then of coorse you must cut your stick,

For the woman must live, however thick

You may be with her: and I'm tould there's

houses

Where the people 'll let ye drink your trousis;

But Higginses! never! and it isn right!

Shirt and trousis! honour bright!

But mostly afore it come to the spout

I'd ask if the money was all run out,

And she'd allis tell me whether or no,

And I'd lave my chiss, and away I'd go.

And so this time I took the street,

And I walked along till I chanced to meet

A shipmate, somewhere down in Wappin'—

And "What was I doin? and where was I stoppin?"

And "Blow it all! here goes the last copper!"

And into a house to get a cropper.

It was one of them dirty stinkin places,
Where the people is not a bit better than bases,
And long-shore lubbers a shammin to fight,
And Jack in his glory, and Jack's delight—
With her elbers stickin outside of her shawl
Like the ribs of a wreck—and the divil and all!
And childer cussin and suckin the gin—
God help them craythurs! the white and the thin!
But what took my eye was an ouldish woman
In and out, and goin and comin,
And heavy feet on the floor overhead,
And "She's long a dyin," there's some of them said.
"Dyin!" says I; "Yes, dying!" says they;
"Well, it's a rum place to choose to die in—eh?"

Aw, the ould woman was up, and she cussed very bad—

And—"Choosin! there's not much choosin, my lad!"

"And what's her name?" says I; says she,

"If ye want to know, it's Jinny Magee."

Aw, never believe me but I took the stair!

And "Where have you got her? where? where?
where?"

"Turn to the right!" says she, "ye muff!"

And there was poor Jinny, sure enough!

There she was lyin on a wisp of straw—

And the dirt and the rags—you never saw—

And her eyes—aw them eyes! and her face—well!
well!

And her that had been such a handsome gel!

"Tom Baynes! Tom Baynes! is it you? is it you?"

Oh can it be? can it be? can it be true?"

Well I cudn speak, but just a nod—

“ Oh it's God that's sent you—it's God, it's God !”

And she gasped and gasped—“ Oh I wronged you,

Thomas !

I wronged you, I did, but he made me promise—

And here I'm now, and I know I'll not live—

Oh Thomas, forgive me, oh Tom, forgive !

Oh reach me your hand, Tom, reach me your hand !”

And she stretched out hers, and—I think I'm a man,

But I shivered all over, and down by the bed,

And “ Hush ! hush ! Jinny ! hush ! hush !” I said ;

“ *Forgive ye !—Yes !*” and I took and pressed

Her poor weak hand against my breast.

“ Look, Tom,” she said, “ look there ! look there !”

And a little bundle beside a chair—

And the little arms and the little legs—

And the round round eyes as big as eggs,

And full of wondher—and “That’s the child!”

She says, and, my God! the woman smiled!

So I took him up, and I says—quite low—

“Is it Taylor’s?” I says: “Oh no! no! no!”

“All right!” I says; “and his name?” “It’s

Simmy:”

And the little frock and the little chimmy!

And starved to the bones—so “Listen to me!

Listen now! listen! Jinny Magee!

By Him that made me, Jinny ven!

This child is mine for ever—Amen!”

And “Simmy!” I says, “remember this!”

And I put him to her for her to kiss;

And then I kissed him; but the little chap

Of coorse he didn understand a rap.

And I turned to Jinny, and she tried to rise,

And I saw the death-light in her eyes—

Clasped hands! clenched teeth! and back with the
head—

Aye, Jinny was dead, boys! Jinny was dead.

“Come here,” I says, and I stamped on the floor,
And up the old woman come to be sure.

“See after her!” I says, “ould Sukee!”

And “All very well!” she says, “but lookee!

You gives yourself terrible airs, young man!

Come now! what are you going to stand?”

But I took the child, and says I, “I’m goin :”

“Indeed!” she says, “and money owin!

And the people’ll be ’spectin a drop of drink,”

And cussin, *and who was she, did I think?*

And the buryin too, for the matter of that!

“Out of the way!” says I, “you cat!”

And down the stair, and out at the front,

And the loblollyboys shoutin "Down with the
blunt!"

And a squarin up, and a lookin big,

And "hould him! down with him! here's a rig!"

"Stand back, you Irish curs! stand back!"

Says I, for there wasn a man in the pack:

"Stand back, you cowards; or I'll soon let ye see!"

So off we went—little Simmy and me.

Is that him there asleep? did ye ax?

Aye, the very same, and them's the fac's.

And now, my lads, you'll hardly miss

To know what poor little Simmy is.

Bless me! it's almost like a dream,

But the very same! the very same!

Grew of coorse, and growin, understand ye!

But you can't keep them small agin nathur, can ye?

Look at him, John ! the quiet he lies !
And the fringes combin over his eyes !
I know I'm a fool—but—feel that curl !
Aw, he's the only thing I have in all the world.

Well, on we marched, and the little thing
Wasn so heavy as a swaller's wing—
A poor little bag of bones, that's all,
He'd have bruk in two if I'd let him fall.
And I tried all the little words I knew,
And actin the way that women do.
But bless ye ! he wouldn take no rest,
But shovin his little head in my breast,
For though I had lived so long ashore,
I never had carried a child before.
And not a farlin at me ; so the only plan
Was to make tracks straight off for Whitehaven,

And chance a logger loadin there—

Aw, heaps of them yandhar—never fear !

And the first time ever I begged was then,

And the women is raelly wuss till the men—

“Be off !” says my lady, “be off ! you scamp !

I never give nothin to a tramp !”

So I made her a bow, for I learnt with my letters,

To “ordlier myself to all my betters.”

But when the sun got low in the sky,

Little Simmy began to cry.

Hungry ! I says, and over a gate

And into a field, and “Wait then, wait !”

And I put him sitting upon the grass—

Dear o’ me ! the green it was—

And the daisies and buttercups that was in,

And him grabbin at them astonishin !

So I milked a cow, and I held my cap,

And I gave it to the little chap ;
And he supped it hearty enough, the sweep !
And stretched hisself, and off to sleep—
And a deuced good supper and nothin to pay,
And “ Over the hills and far away.”

So by hook, or by crook, or however it was,
I got down to Whitehaven at last ;
And a Ramsey logger they call the Map—
Jemmy Corkhill—I knew the chap.
“ Hullo ! ” says I—“ Hullo ! ” says he ;
It’s yourself that’s been on the devil’s spree,
And a baby at ye—well ! well ! good Lord ! ”
“ All right ! ” says I, and heaves him aboard—
And—*Bless his soul the fun ! and a chile in !*
So that’s the way I got to the Islan’.
I landed at Ramsey and started off

The soonest I could, and past Ballaugh,
And Kirk Michael, and the Ballacraigne—
I hadn been there I could tell ye the when.
And you may think how he wasn much of a load,
But I was checked when I come on the mountain
road ;

And I found a spot where the ling was high,
And terrible thick and soft and dry—
And a big rock standin Nor-east by East—
The way of the wind—aw, a beautiful place !

So I laid me down, and the child in my arms,
And the quick little breath, and the dogs at the
farms,
And the curlews whistlin, passin by—
And the noise of the river below, and the sigh
Of the mountain breeze—I kept awake,

And a star come out like a swan on a lake,
White and lonely ; and a sort of amazement
Got hould on me, and the leads of a casement
Crissed-crossed on the sky like a window-frame,
And the long, long look ! and the far it came !
Aw dear ! I thought it was Jinny Magee
In heaven makin signs to me.

And sleep at last, and when I awoke,
The stars was gone, and the day was broke,
And the bees beginnin to think of the honey,
And who was there but little sonny ?
Loosed from my arms, and catchin my hair,
And laughin, and I laughed too, I'll swear.
And says I—"Come, Simmy, my little buffer !
You're small, but what is it sayin ?—*Suffer*
The little children to come to me—
So here goes ! Simmy ;" and "Glory be,"

I said, and "Our Father," and two or three
Little hymns I remembered—"Let dogs delight,"
The first two verses middling right—
And "Little boy with cheerful eye,
Bright and blue as yandhar sky ;"
And down, and takin the road to the Lhen,
And the clear the sun was shinin then,
And the little church that white ; and below--
The stones—and—dell, you know ! you know !

But at last I come to the shore, and I ran,
For though it was early I saw a man
Diggin lug on the beach, and I didn want
To meet the like, so I made a slant,
And back and in by the Claddagh lane,
And round by the gable—Ned knows what I mean ;
And in at the door ; and "Mawther !" I said,

“Mawther !” but she was still in bed.
“Mawther ! look here ! look here !” I cried ;
And I tould her all how Jinny had died,
And this was the youngster, and what I intended,
And she heard me till my story was ended,
And just like a stone—aw, never a word !
And me gettin angry, till this little bird
Chirrup up with a crow and a leap—
And—“ Mammy seepy ! Mammy as’eep ”--
Just that baby way—aw, then the flood
Of the woman’s-life come into her blood ;
And she stretched her arms, and I gave him to her,
And she cried till she couldn cry no more.
And she took to him grand, though of coorse at fuss
Her hand was out, ye see, to nuss.
But after dinner she had him as nice—
And a singin, bless ye, with her poor ould vice.

The sun was down when I left them awhile,
And up the Claddagh, and over the stile,
And into the ould churchyard, and tryin
To find the place where Betsy was lyin.
It was nearly dark, but I wasn alone,
For I seen a man bending over a stone—
And the look, and the heave of the breast—I
could see

It *was* a man—in his agony.

And nearer! nearer! the head! the hair!

My God! it was Taylor! Taylor—*there!*

Aw, then it all come back again,

All the throuble and all the pain,

And the one thought in my head—*him there at her
grave!*

And I stopped, and I said, "May Jesus save

His soul! for his life is in my hand—

Life for life ! it's God's command,

Life for life ! " and I measured my step—

" So long he shall live ! " and I crep and crep—

Aw, the murderer's creep—" God give him grace ! "

Thinks I—then to him, and looked in his face.

Aw, that face ! he raised it—it wasn surprise,

• It wasn fear that was in his eyes ;

But the look of a man that's fairly done

With everythin that's under the sun.

Ah, mates ! however it was with me,

He had loved her, he *loved* her—my Betsy Lee !

" Taylor ! " I said ; but he never spoke :

" You loved her," I said, " and your heart is broke."

And he looked—aw, the look—" Come, give us your
hand ! "

I says—" *Forgive you ?* I can ! I can !

For the love that was so terrible strong.

For the love that made you do the wrong."

And, with them words, I saw the star

I tould you of, but brighter far :

It wasn Jinny, but Betsy now !

" Misther Taylor," I says, " we cannot tell how,

But it was love—yes ! yes ! it was love ! it was love !

And He's taken her to Hisself above ;

And it's Him that'll see that nothin annoys her,

And—" " Watch below ! turn up !" " Aye, aye, sir !"

THE END.

LONDON :
R. CLAY, SONS, AND TAYLOR, PRINTERS
BREAD STREET HILL.









